



# UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE  
United States Patent and Trademark Office  
Address: COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS  
P.O. Box 1450  
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450  
www.uspto.gov

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/706,416	11/13/2003	Sten R. Gerfast		6809

7590

08/31/2005

STEN R. GERFAST  
1802 VALLEY CURVE ROAD  
MENDOTA HEIGHTS, MN 55118

EXAMINER
----------

COZART, JERMIE E

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
----------	--------------

3726

DATE MAILED: 08/31/2005

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

## Office Action Summary

**Application No.**

10/706,416

**Applicant(s)**

GERFAST, STEN R.

**Examiner**

Jermie Cozart

**Art Unit**

3726

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

### Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

### Status

- 1) ☐ Responsive to communication(s) filed on \_\_\_\_.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

### Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-12 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) \_\_\_\_ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-12 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

### Application Papers

- 9) ☒ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on \_\_\_\_ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.  
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).  
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

### Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some \* c) ☐ None of:
- ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
  - ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. \_\_\_\_.
  - ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- \* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

### Attachment(s)

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)   | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)<br>Paper No(s)/Mail Date. ____ |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)                                  | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)            |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)<br>Paper No(s)/Mail Date ____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: ____  |

## **DETAILED ACTION**

### ***Specification***

1. The specification is objected to as failing to provide proper antecedent basis for the claimed subject matter. See 37 CFR 1.75(d)(1) and MPEP § 608.01(o). Correction of the following is required: The strips are of other material than metal.

### ***Claim Objections***

2. Claims 4, 6, and 10 are objected to because of the following informalities: In **claim 4**, line 1, “then” is objected to because it is the incorrect word being used, it is suggested to change “then” to - -than- -; In **claim 6**, line 4, “are” is objected to because it is grammatically incorrect and therefore should be deleted, “having” is objected to because it is the incorrect word being used and should be changed to - -have- -; In **claim 10**, line 2, “then” is objected to because it is the incorrect word being used, it is suggested to change “then” to - -than- -. Appropriate correction is required.

### ***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112***

3. The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:  
  
The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.
4. Claims 1-12 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. In **claim 1**, line 2, it is unclear as to what is meant by the term “both abutments”. In claim 7, line 2, it is unclear as to what is meant by the term “both abutments”. Appropriate correction is required.

Art Unit: 3726

5. Claim 1 recites the limitation "it" in line 3 of the claim. There is insufficient antecedent basis for this limitation in the claim.
6. Claim 6 recites the limitation "said keystone shaped slugs" in line 1 of the claim. There is insufficient antecedent basis for this limitation in the claim.
7. Claim 6 recites the limitation "said rounded corners" in line 2 of the claim. There is insufficient antecedent basis for this limitation in the claim.
8. Claim 7 recites the limitation "it" in line 3 of the claim. There is insufficient antecedent basis for this limitation in the claim.
9. Claim 12 recites the limitation "said clinching height" in line 1 of the claim. There is insufficient antecedent basis for this limitation in the claim.

***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102***

10. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

11. Claims 1, 5, 7, 11, and 12 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Smith et al. (2,901,816).

Smith discloses abutting two metal strips (12, 13), punching a substantially rectangular slot (18, 19) into both abutments (i.e. overlapping portions of strips 12, 13), inserting into the two slots a deformable slug/knock-out-slug (14, 15, 16, 17), which is essentially reinserted via deformation back into the center of slot then clinched into the slots, thereby securely joining the strips. A plurality of slots (14, 15, 16, 17) is used.

The clinching height (fig. 8) is slightly below the surface of the strip. *See col. 1, lines 18-20; col. 2, line 34 – col. 4, line 57; and figs. 1-8 for further clarification.*

***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103***

12. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

13. Claims 1-11 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Dubus (1,141,046).

Regarding claims 1-3, 5, and 6, Dubus discloses abutting (i.e. lean for support on one another) two strips (1, 2) then punching a substantially rectangular slot (figs. 4-6) into both abutments, and inserting into the two slots a deformable slug (3,4; 5,6; 7, 8), and clinching it into the slots, thereby securely joining the strips. The abutments (i.e. overlapping portions of strips 1,2 in fig. 5) are keystone shaped instead of rectangular. The abutments have two rounded edges (fig. 5) inherently produced by a punch (i.e. punching operation carried out, lines 64-65), and it is inherent that a punch is normally used in cooperation with a corresponding die. A plurality of slots (not labeled, figs. 4-6) is used. The keystone shaped slugs (5, 6 in fig. 5) also have rounded corners. *See lines 38-100 and figures 1 and 4-6 for further clarification.*

Regarding claims 7-9 and 11, Dubus discloses abutting strips (1, 2), punching a substantially rectangular slot (figs. 4-6) into both abutments, using one knock-out-slug (3,4; 5,6; 7, 8) from the punching, re-inserting the slug into the center of the abutment,

Art Unit: 3726

clinchng it into the slots thereby securely joining the strips. The slots in both the abutments is keystone shaped (fig. 5) instead of rectangular. The slots in both the abutments have two rounded edges (fig. 5) produced by both a punch (lines 64-65) inherently having a cooperating die. A plurality of slots (not labeled, figs. 4) is used.

*See lines 38-100 and figures 1 and 4-6 for further clarification.*

Dubus does not disclose expressly the strips being metal or material other than metal.

At the time the invention was made, it would have been an obvious matter of design choice to a person of ordinary skill in the art to make the strips of Dubus either metal or material other than metal because Applicant has not disclosed that making the strips of metal or material other than metal provides an advantage, is used for a particular purpose, or solves a stated problem. One of ordinary skill in the art, furthermore, would have expected Applicant's invention to perform equally well with strips of Dubus because the strips are effectively joined to one another.

Therefore, it would have been an obvious matter of design choice to modify Dubus to obtain the invention as specified in claim 1, 4, and 10.

### ***Conclusion***

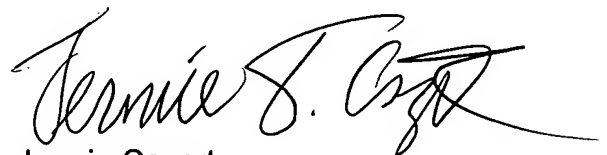
14. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure. The references cited on the attached PTO-892 are cited to show joining metal sheets to one another.

Art Unit: 3726

15. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Jermie Cozart whose telephone number is 571-272-4528. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Thursday, 7:30 am - 6:00 pm.

16. If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Dave Bryant can be reached on 571-272-4526. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

17. Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).



Jermie Cozart  
Examiner  
Art Unit 3726